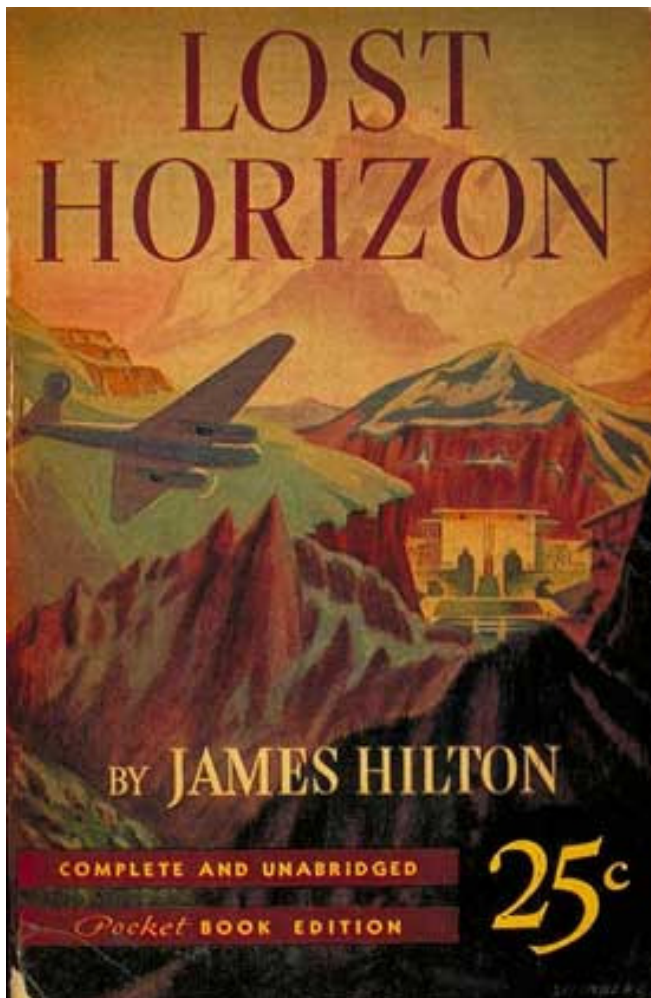


Book Club – Monday, November 19, 9:30 a.m.

‘Lost Horizon’ by James Hilton

“If we have not found the heaven within, we have not found the heaven without”



While attempting to escape a civil war, four people are kidnapped and transported to the Tibetan mountains. After their plane crashes, they are found by a mysterious Chinese man. He leads them to a monastery hidden in "the valley of the blue moon" -- Shangri-La.

The valley of Shangri-la is a peaceful place, taking from the world around it, but remaining aloof from all the negative actions of that world. Shangri-la is a land of mystery and matchless beauty where life is lived in tranquil wonder, beyond the grasp of a doomed world, a land where peace reigns and the inhabitants live for hundreds of years.

Although idyllic, it is not the paradise of the Bible, nor of any Western philosophy, invoking instead much that is Eastern. The dichotomy between the world outside the valley and the society which Hilton envisioned is brought into even starker contrast by today's knowledge that a war much worse than the one Conway fought in, would engulf many regions of the world less than a decade after Hilton wrote the book. Hilton foresaw another great war and

mentions it as a vague prophecy in the book.

Lost Horizon is the type of book written to make the reader think. Even at the very end, when everything seems to be settled, Hilton throws the reader a curve ball, causing them to wonder whether Conway's memories of Shangri-La are real or merely the result of shock and exposure. And, if they are real, does the secret guarded in Shangri-La really exist or was it merely a fairy tale like those told by a different Perrault?

